

Table 4:7
Rate of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Per 100,000 (2001)

	Latino	White	African American	American Indian	Asian
Primary & Secondary Syphilis	3.7	1.2	18.1	60.8	0.9
Early Syphilis	13.2	2.7	37.4	101.7	0.9
Congenital Syphilis	NA	36.8	52.6	NA	NA
Gonorrhea	90.8	38.0	804.9	110.1	192.9
Chlamydia	389.2	99.7	837.2	261.2	185.2
HIV/AIDS	16.4	6.3	66.5	17.8	8.7

Source: HIV/STD Prevention and Care Branch. North Carolina: 2001 STD Surveillance Report. NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. NA: Because of the small number of cases with congenital syphilis, the state only reports data for "other," which includes American Indians, Asian and Hispanic/Latino. In 2001, the rate of congenital syphilis for the "other" category was 10.5.

There are a number of factors that may explain why Latino adults are generally healthier than other groups. First-generation immigrants may have better health habits than do other people who have lived in the United States for longer periods of time.²⁴ In addition, people may return to their families and natural support systems in their countries of origin when they become seriously ill, leaving healthier Latinos in the United States.²⁵ Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) show that North Carolina Latino adults are more likely to smoke than either non-Latino whites or African Americans, and are more likely to be overweight than non-Latino whites (but less likely than African Americans).²⁶ If the data are accurate, and Latinos have a higher incidence of obesity and smoking, they may develop more severe chronic conditions over time.

Although not reflected in the mortality statistics, the health of migrant and seasonal farmworkers is generally thought to be worse than the general Latino population. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families have different and more complex problems, many of which can be attributed to a mobile lifestyle and the environmental and occupational hazards of farm work. Migrants and seasonal farmworkers in North Carolina, like elsewhere, are more likely to have HIV infections than other groups.²⁷ A national study suggests that up to 20% of Latino migrant farmworkers have self-injected medicines, often using shared needles.²⁸ Migrants also have a 20-25 times higher rate of tuberculosis and communicable diseases than the national average.²⁹ Prevalence rates for parasites among farmworker populations range from 20-80% in North Carolina migrant farmworkers.³⁰

ORAL HEALTH³¹

Dental disease is the most common chronic childhood disease, occurring five to eight times more often than asthma.³² It is very concentrated, typically in low-income populations, with about 25% of children having about 80% of dental disease in permanent teeth. Every 10-15 years, North Carolina conducts statewide